

Superintendent's Update

September 2020



Mission:



It is the mission of the Orleans Central Supervisory Union to provide an environment that celebrates diversity and creativity, promotes inclusion and integrity, and partners with parents and community members to give students access to a 21st century education.

Vision:

All of our students will have choices for success throughout their lives.



Upcoming Dates

Boards	Teachers and Students
<p>High School Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct. 5 – 6:15 pm – LR and virtual Oct. 19 – 6:15 pm – LR and virtual <p>Elementary Middle-School (EMS) Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct. 12 – 6:00pm – COFEC and virtual Oct. 26 – 6:00pm – COFEC and virtual <p>OCSU Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct. 7 – 6:00pm – COFEC and virtual <p>Negotiations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct. 1 – 5:30pm – Lake Region Oct. 13 – 5:30pm – Lake Region 	<p>October 8 – Early release for students, PLCs for staff</p> <p>Oct. 8 - Student-led conferences (evening)</p> <p>Oct. 9 – No school for students - Student-led conferences (day)</p> <p>Oct. 12 – No school for students, In-service for teachers</p>



From Bev's Desk:

Each year, all OCSU employees are required to complete mandatory trainings. All of our [mandatory trainings](#) are digitized and can be found on the OCSU website. For the 2020-2021 school year there are 12 mandatory trainings:

1. Universal Precautions and Blood-borne Pathogens
2. Recognizing and Responding to Bias and Inequity
3. Confidentiality and FERPA
4. Act 1: Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse
5. Acceptable Use Guidelines for Electronic Communications
6. Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying of Students
7. Employee Harassment
8. Rule 4500: Restraint and Seclusion
9. Civil Rights in Child Nutrition Programs
10. VOSHA training
11. Concussion training

The training on Recognizing and Responding to Bias and Inequity is a new training this year. While most of the trainings are done individually by employees during in-service time, the Bias and Inequity training was facilitated by the two teachers (Kyle Chadburn and Andrea Gratton) who created it. All employees attended the 90 minute training (virtually) on Sept. 1. The training is based on the Equity Literacy Framework from the [Equity Literacy Institute](#). The training begins with the following definition of equity:

Equity is not merely about giving every student what they need to succeed in an individual sense. This way of imagining equity obscures our responsibility to address institutional bias and inequity. Instead, equity is a process through which we ensure that policies, practices, institutional cultures, and ideologies are actively equitable, purposefully attending to the interests of the students and families to whose interests we have attended inequitably.

The training is divided into two sections:

- Recognizing bias
- Responding to bias

Each section includes video examples and other examples of bias, and offers an opportunity for participants to practice both recognizing and responding to bias. Additionally the training outlines some specific strategies to use when responding to bias.

1. Interrupt – Speak up against every biased remark, every time.

2. Question – Ask simple, exploratory questions. Remember that aggressive questioning can be counterproductive
3. Educate – Explain why the biased remark is offensive.
4. Echo – When multiple people speak up against bias it can be powerful.

The training also references the [Call Out/Call In](#) protocol. That protocol identifies prompts to use when it is necessary to either interrupt bias or to call people in to the conversation. Many of us have found these prompts extremely useful in situations that call for us to address bias.

Including “Recognizing and Responding to Bias and Inequity” as one of our mandatory trainings, is one of our first steps in providing professional development to all of our staff on this important topic.

School Boards



It is the time of year for the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) annual meeting, which includes voting on resolutions submitted by member boards. The VSBA has recently informed me that Board members are the only ones allowed to vote, you cannot appoint the Superintendent to vote as your proxy. Each SU is allowed one vote. At their Oct. 7th meeting, the OCSU board will need to appoint someone to represent our supervisory union. The annual meeting is on Oct. 29th at 5:00pm and it will be held virtually.

This year there are 9 resolutions that have been proposed. Below is a brief description of each one and the VSBA’s recommendation as to that resolution. On Oct. 29th, the membership has the opportunity to vote on all resolutions regardless of the VSBA recommendations.

Resolution	Rationale	VSBA Board Recommendation
To allow school boards to remove and replace board officers after they are elected, via a fair and judicious process.	State law does not allow for removal of officers once they have been elected, even if they behave poorly. Note: This does not mean they are removed from being a board member, it only means they no longer serve as an officer	Pass
To provide universal access to highspeed broadband service to every student and family in VT and to provide financial support to those	The inequity of access to acceptable broadband services has exacerbated the inequities regarding educational opportunities for all students.	Pass

who need it (but not through an unfunded mandate).		
Vermont’s PreK-12 students should be held harmless from reductions to the education fund and should be given necessary resources.	School districts should not bear the consequences of the economic conditions and loss of revenue caused by the state of emergency.	Pass
A study should be conducted to better understand the governing models and budgeting structure of Career Technical Education (CTE) centers.	A majority of school districts in VT do not have any say in governance or budgeting for the tech centers their students attend.	Do not pass
State statutes and regulations should be reviewed and amended to provide school districts greater flexibility in delegating responsibilities to superintendents.	This would allow boards to streamline their work.	Do not pass
State statute should be amended to allow school districts the option to engage voters directly with Australian ballot questions without first conducting a meeting to decide if a question can be put on an Australian ballot (essentially 2 votes to make one decision).	Since merged districts are considerably larger, locations of meetings for floor votes may make it more difficult for some people to participate.	Pass
Urge the legislature to expand funding to mental health counseling and supports for students after the pandemic.	The pandemic has had a potentially significant increase in trauma and social-emotional needs of students.	Pass
Promote and support implicit bias training for all faculty and staff in Vermont schools. Promote professional learning for board members and school leaders on the topics of Equity Literacy, Curriculum Audits, Examining Bias in Policies and Procedures, Culturally Responsive Instruction and School Culture, Student	We must recognize that racism and hate have no place in our schools, and we must better educate ourselves and our communities about racism and discrimination.	Pass

Leadership and Voice, and Examining Power and Privilege in Schools.		
To allow students whose residence changes to remain in the district they were registered in at any time they are in grades 8-12, and for that district to retain the ADM.	This assures that students who move can remain in their same school even if there are no school choice slots available, and it allows the school to retain the count for that student.	Pass
State and federal government provide financial support that ensures students receive necessary academic, physical, and emotional resources.	This is meant to address the economic impacts of the pandemic.	Pass

I imagine board members have strong opinions on these resolutions and during October board meetings may want to have discussions on them, and make recommendations to the OCSU proxy about voting.

The information in the table above is my summary of the resolutions, you can learn more about them and hear a more in-depth rationale from boards that proposed them, by watching [this video](#) (it's about 29 minutes long).

Budget FY22

As we begin to prepare for the FY22 budget season, there are many unknowns that make budget preparation especially challenging.

At the OCSU level the challenges include preschool and special education. Prior to Act 166 (universal preschool) there were typically about 80 students enrolled in preschool at COFEC. Act 166 allowed for school choice for preschool and our enrollment decreased to about 60 students. This resulted in the elimination of a half-time preschool teacher. This year, due to the pandemic, many parents have chosen to not send their children to preschool, and our enrollment is about 30 students at COFEC. We were able to hire one of the preschool teachers to teach kindergarten, effectively reducing the preschool staff by one full-time teacher. The question now is whether or not enrollment will increase back to pre-pandemic levels next year, and it's much too early to make a reliable prediction. This will be one of the discussions during OCSU board budgeting sessions.

Budgeting for special education is always challenging. We can budget for students who are currently enrolled, but lately there have been increasing numbers of students moving to OCSU with special needs, and it's difficult to anticipate those numbers and needs. An additional challenge this year has been transporting students to alternative placements. Typically we rely on RCT to transport those students, but due to the pandemic, RCT is experiencing a severe shortage

of drivers. We were informed a couple of days before school began, that they were unable to transport many of our students, leaving us to scramble to find a solution. If this continues to be a problem, OCSU may need to investigate other means of transportation to alternative placements.

At the elementary-middle school level there will need to be discussions about the future of the remote academy. If this is something that is beneficial for students and families we may wish to continue to offer a remote option, and that will require increasing staffing. This year we staffed the remote academy by transferring teachers, but this has led to us being short-staffed in some of our schools. The board will either need to consider reconfiguring schools or adding staff.

This year we have about 70 fewer students enrolled at the K-8 level due to families choosing Home Study. It is unknown if those students will return to our schools next year or not. Some families may decide that Home Study works well for them and they may wish to continue. Again, it is much too soon to know this which makes it difficult to anticipate.

These are just a few of the challenges we face during budget preparation, and the board will need to thoughtfully discuss how to proceed.

Enrollment

Total enrollment across all schools is 1051.

Enrollment											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	
Albany	7	8	6	4	8	10	7	5	6	61	
Barton	15	9	9	18	11	15	9	15	8	109	
Brownington	4	5	7	13	10	9	10	11	11	80	
Glover	4	8	6	9	13	12	10	15	12	89	
Irasburg	13	9	7	13	4	15	7	14	15	97	
Orleans	10	6	9	19	6	13	9	12	12	96	
Remote Academy	8	20	9	8	17	11	11	9	6	99	
CEC	1		3	1		1	5	2	1	14	
Total K-8	62	65	56	85	69	86	68	83	71	645	

	9	10	11	12	Total
LR	93	107	83	79	362

Preschool	3 years	4 years	Total
Albany	6	4	10
COFEC	19	15	34
Total			44

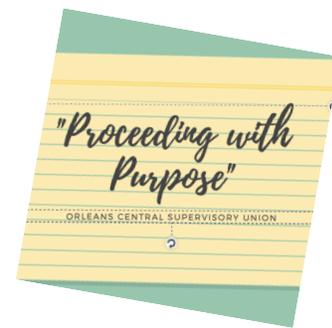
Home Study 20-21			
	19-20	20-21 Enrolled	20-21 In Process
Albany	6	18	2
Barton	6	11	8
Brownington	0	5	6
Glover	3	5	2
Irasburg	6	9	15
Orleans	4	7	5
Lake Region	8	5	10
Total	33	60	48

Superintendent's Report September 2020

Here are the tasks I worked on in September:

Fostering Educational Excellence

- Prepared board agendas
- Attended board meetings
- Prepared for and attended a negotiations session
- Participated in an anti-bias training
- Attended a meeting of the Equity Team



Developing Quality Leadership and Staff

- Facilitated weekly meetings for central office administrators
- Attended weekly NEK superintendent meetings
- Attended weekly meetings with all superintendents and Dan French
- Planned for and facilitated weekly cabinet meetings
- Met individually with principals to provide support
- Attended part one of a training on hazing, harassment, and bullying procedures
- Attended two Vermont Superintendent Association meetings

Communicating with Stakeholders

- Managed the OCSU social media accounts
- Published the September issue of the Superintendent's Update
- Multiple meetings each week with the president of the Association
- Attended a meeting with medical partners
- Met with multiple parents to hear concerns
- Attended a meeting with Stephanie Bowen to discuss truancy procedures

Operational Efficiencies

- Met with Kelly Locke to discuss special education staffing
- Met weekly with Lisa Worden and Niki Libby to discuss HR and other personnel matters
- Met with Mike Moriarty to discuss/plan for Titles funds

- Met with Heather Wright (often) to discuss finances
- Tasks associated with onboarding/offboarding of employees
- Managed personnel issues
- Attended a webinar with the VT Dept. of Health on managing COVID cases in schools